

BOROUGH OF BODMIN.

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*Annual Report*

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

Year ending 31st December, 1949

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BODMIN:

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PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF:

Medical Officer of Health:

J. REED, M.B., Ch.B., B.Sc., D.P.H.

Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector:

JOHN MILES, M.I.H.E., A.R.San.I.

**Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors,**

I have pleasure in presenting the Annual Report for 1949, the first year of my appointment as Medical Officer of Health to the Borough. The post combines the duties of Medical Officer of Health to the Wadebridge Rural and Padstow Urban Districts and of Assistant County Medical Officer for certain provisions of the County Council under Part 3 of the National Health Service Act 1946, and of Assistant School Medical Officer for the combined area. The nature of this appointment is naturally of considerable advantage to me as Medical Officer of Health, since almost all matters involving the health provisions of the community pass through a single office. I should like to express my appreciation to you and to the Council's officials for their kindness and assistance in helping me so readily to settle down in this new post.

The year has been marked by the first progressive step to be taken, small though it may be, against the considerable proportion of old insanitary dwellings to be found within the Borough. In addition, though little real progress has been visible, an attempt has been made to secure improvement in the town's water supply. The acquisition of better houses and water supplies, together, hold out the greatest promise for the betterment of the health of the community as a whole and I would urge the Council to press for improved standards in these matters as vigorously as the present difficult conditions allow.

# I. STATISTICS.

## General Statistics.

Area in acres	...	3,311
Estimated mid-year population		5,775
Total Population	...	6,215
Comparability Factor	...	0.81
Number of Inhabited Houses		1,373
Rateable Value	...	£29,458
Sum represented by penny rate		£115-16-10

## Vital Statistics.

### Live Births.

TABLE I.

Number of Registered Live Births 1949.

	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	34	39	73
Illegitimate	1	5	6
Total	35	44	79

Birth Rate 12.39 per 1,000 total population

Birth Rate England and Wales—16.7 per 1,000 total population

### Still Births.

TABLE II.

Number of Still Births Registered 1949.

	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	1	—	1
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Total	1	—	1

Still Birth Rate—12.5 per 1,000 total births, or 0.16 per 1,000 total population

Still Birth Rate England and Wales—0.39 per 1,000 total population

## Infant Mortality.

TABLE III.

Number of Infant Deaths Registered 1949.

	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	—	1	1
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Total	—	1	1

Infant Mortality Rate—12·6 per 1,000 live births

Infant Mortality Rate in England and Wales—32  
per 1,000 live births

## Deaths.

Number of Deaths Registered 1949.

Male	Female	Total
25	30	55

Crude Death Rate—8·84 per 1,000 total population

Death rate England and Wales—11·7 per 1,000  
total population

## Causes of Death.

TABLE IV.

Distribution of Deaths by Diseases.

	Male	Female	Total
Diseases of Heart	10	12	22
Diseases of Intracranial Vessels	1	6	7
Other circulatory diseases	1	4	5
Respiratory diseases excluding tuberculosis	2	4	6
Diseases of Digestive System	1	—	1
Cancer	6	1	7
Respiratory tuberculosis	—	1	1
Prematurity	—	1	1
Other causes	4	1	5
Total—	25	30	55

TABLE V.

Distribution of Ages at Death.

Age	Male	Female	Total
0 — 1 month	—	1	1
1 month — 1 year	—	—	—
1 year — 20 years	1	—	1
21 — 40 years	1	1	2
41 — 60 years	4	3	7
61 — 70 years	6	7	13
71 — 80 years	8	6	14
81 — 90 years	5	9	14
91 years and over	—	3	3
Total—	25	30	55

The vital statistics of the Borough show a general improvement as compared with 1948 and are favourable as compared with those of England and Wales as a whole. The infant mortality and still birth rates cannot be regarded as significant since the numbers involved are so small.

## II. GENERAL PROVISIONS OF HEALTH SERVICES.

### Hospital and Maternity Accommodation.

Hospital services are provided by the West Cornwall Hospital Management Committee at the East Cornwall Hospital, Bodmin and the Royal Cornwall Infirmary, Truro. Specialist services at the East Cornwall Hospital now include, medical, surgical, orthopaedic, E.N.T., chest and venereal diseases. Mental diseases requiring admission are taken to the St. Lawrence's Hospital, situated in the Borough and infectious diseases are taken to the Isolation Hospital at Truro.

Maternity accommodation was provided during the year at the maternity unit at Redruth and at a private nursing home in the town. The latter was closed at the end of the year, thus leaving the only available accommodation some 30 miles away.



## **Ambulance and Hospital Car Services.**

The transport of sick persons unfit to travel by public services is the responsibility of the County Council. Two Ambulances were stationed in the Borough for stretcher and emergency cases, and from October a Utlecon ambulance was added mainly for the conveyance of sitting cases. In addition hospital cars were employed to carry sitting cases to out-patients departments. The County Council's vehicles were used extensively outside the Borough and the service provided to the town was considered to be adequate during the year.

## **Home Nursing and Midwifery Services.**

The Borough is supplied under County Council arrangements with 2 District Nurse Midwives who undertake home nursing, domiciliary midwifery and general health visiting duties. In cases of tuberculosis and venereal disease health visiting is performed by a full-time health visitor employed over a larger district. The services during 1949 were considered to be adequate.

## **Maternity and Child Welfare.**

**Infant Welfare Centres.** In addition to midwifery and health visiting services the County Council holds an Infant Welfare Centre fortnightly in premises not ideal for the purpose. The centre was well attended during the year and the quarterly average attendances were 24, 31, 24 and 30.

**Ante and Post-Natal Services.** Other than domiciliary supervision by General Practitioners and midwives, specialist care is provided at St. Austell or Newquay through the provisions of the West Cornwall Hospital Management Committee. The County Council provides no ante or post-natal clinic.



## **Home Help Services.**

Four Home-helps were employed in the Berough during the year under the County Council's scheme.

## **Prevention of Illness, Care and After-Care.**

**Tuberculosis.** All cases of notified tuberculosis were visited and enquiries made into their possible need, in accordance with the County Council's provisions. No cases qualified for the County Council's grant for additional food stuffs. In one case a shelter was provided but the type was considered unsuitable for the purpose and could not be used.

**Hospital Discharges and Infectious Diseases.** Visits to sick persons, notified by almoners as having been discharged from hospital, were made to ascertain the nursing requirements or additional assistance. Notified infectious diseases were visited and instructions in relation to prevention of spread given. Appropriate disinfection was carried out where necessary.

**Accommodation for Aged and Infirm.** During 1949, 3 old persons falling ill and requiring assistance created some difficulty in regard to accommodation. They were evidently excluded from County Council homes on the grounds of sickness, and hospital beds in Geriatric Units were difficult to obtain. It was not necessary to take action under Section 47 of the National Assistance Act 1946, in any of these cases.

## **School Health Services.**

**Premises.** The 3 schools in Bodmin are all of considerable age and out of date. The elementary schools were particularly overcrowded during the

year. Sanitary provisions were considered to be of unsuitable pattern and inadequate in number. Certain recommendations for immediate improvement were made to the school managers in the case of the County Primary school sanitation. The washing facilities were poor, and staff provisions absent. The water supply, obtained by mains from the town supply could not be regarded as satisfactory.

**Pupils.** In the elementary schools, 301 pupils of the 627 in attendance were examined at routine inspection. Five only were considered to be of poor nutrition, 57 defects were recorded as requiring either treatment or to be kept under observation. 120 pupils of the 294 attending the Grammar School were examined at routine inspection, none were considered as of poor nutrition and 15 defects were recorded.

**School Canteen and Milk Supplies.** These were considered to be suitably provided during the year.

### **III. SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES.**

#### **Water Supplies.**

The supply to the Bodmin Borough was the subject of a special report submitted to the Council in December. The report contained observations on the supply in its collection, delivery and distribution to the town, and evidence was submitted in relation to the bacteriological quality. The report was forwarded to the Ministry of Health.

It would be reasonable to state that during 1949 the quantity of water supplied was adequate. The same could not be said of the quality. To my knowledge the raw water passing to supply was not examined by the Water Company, nor for the

bacteriological purposes, after treatment. The results taken at various sites in the town are tabulated below.

TABLE VI.  
Water Samples, 1949.

Date of Sample.	Presumptive Coliform Count per 100 cc.	Typical B. Coli Count per 100 cc.
January 1st, 1949	8	—
8th, 1949	5	—
17th, 1949	—	—
24th, 1949	2	—
February 7th, 1949	3	—
19th, 1949	2	—
26th, 1949	3	—
April 9th, 1949	160	—
May 9th, 1949	1	—
June 7th, 1949	180	180
7th, 1949	180	30
11th, 1949	13	3
14th, 1949	90	1
18th, 1949	50	2
25th, 1949	20	—
27th, 1949	35	1
July 5th, 1949	1	—
11th, 1949	90	3
16th, 1949	2	—
23rd, 1949	5	1
Aug. 6th, 1949	17	13
11th, 1949	13	1
22nd, 1949	90	1
22nd, 1949	50	5
Sept. 9th, 1949	35	—
10th, 1949	25	5
Oct. 3rd, 1949	5	—
Nov. 2nd, 1949	—	—
10th, 1949	1	—
21st, 1949	90	90
26th, 1949	5	1
Dec. 16th, 1949	2	—

The conclusions arrived at in the report were that the community were not given adequate safeguard in relation to their water supply, and that the Water Company had not the means established in their scheme to provide such safeguard. Adverse reports were passed on to the Water Company for necessary action to be taken.

During the year the Company laid new mains to the Beacon Housing Estate and to Westheath Road.

## Sewerage.

A new 9" sewer was laid by direct labour from the Beacon Estate via Crinnicks Hill to connect with the main sewer in St. Nicholas Street. The new houses in Meadow Place were connected to the existing sewer in Beacon Hill by a new 6" branch sewer.

The disposal works at Dragon Pits and Scarletts Well functioned well throughout the year, samples of effluent falling within the approved standards.

## Refuse Disposal.

The refuse tip was satisfactorily controlled during the year, and gave rise to no nuisance. The general standard of refuse receptacle used by householders is low, even on the new council estates. The provision of proper bins, by the Council, making a statutory charge would be worthy of consideration.

## Sanitary Inspection.

### Summary of Visits.

Housing	223
Slaughterhouse	61
Shops & Food Preparation Premises	80
Dairies and Cowsheds	19

## Rodent Control.

The Council employs its own operative, trained in approved methods of extermination. No complaints of infestation were received during the year.

## Camping Sites.

The single licensed camping site at Cooksland was conducted satisfactorily during 1949, and gave rise to no nuisance.

## IV. FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

Forty-one factories are listed in the Council's register for supervision, either wholly or in part. A total of 51 inspections were made, and defects found and remedied in 3 cases.

## V. HOUSING.

Progress of the Council's housing programme was considerable during the year. Ten traditional type houses were completed, and 20 two-bedroom Cornish unit flats were completed and occupied.

The progress allowed some action to be taken in regard to a few of the many insanitary houses which exist in the Borough. The Council were able to accept recommendations for action to be taken in the case of four such premises under Section 11, Housing Act, 1936. One demolition order was made, and three undertakings not to use for human habitation were obtained.

In relation to repairs statutory notices were served in eight cases, all with satisfactory results.

## VI. FOOD AND DRUGS.

### Milk and Dairies.

The supervision of milk production in the Borough passed from the Council to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in October who were provided with necessary information contained in the Milk and Dairies register. The supervision of distributors premises still remains with the Council.

### Ice Cream.

During February the whole of the premises listed in the register were visited with a view to

unifying the conditions applied to registration to sell ice-cream. Four additional premises were inspected during the year and registrations made.

Samples were taken at intervals and of the ten, six were in Grade 1, one in Grade 2 and three in Grade 3.

## Slaughter of Animals

All slaughtering was carried out in the local slaughterhouse which was well maintained throughout the year. The following table summarises the inspections made:—

TABLE VII.  
Carcasses Inspected and Condemned.

	Bullocks & Cows	Calves	Sheep	Pigs
Number killed	612	208	2,098	31
Number inspected	524	151	1,688	31
Whole carcasses condemned except for Tuberculosis	15	2	18	3
Carcasses of which some part was condemned other than for Tuberculosis	136	4	98	3
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Disease or Injury other than Tuberculosis	29	4	7	20
Whole carcasses condemned for Tuberculosis	17	—	—	1
Part carcasses condemned for Tuberculosis	16	—	—	—
Percentage of number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	6	—	—	3



## Food Poisoning

No cases of food poisoning were notified by general practitioners during the year.

## Sampling

The County Council inspectors submitted 32 samples of milk for adulteration tests and 15 samples of other foodstuffs for purity. No deficiencies were found in any samples.

## VII. Prevalence & Control of Infectious Diseases

TABLE VIII.

Notified Infectious Diseases during 1949 excluding tuberculosis.

Dysentery	.....	31
Measles	.....	15
Whooping Cough	.....	2
Scarlet Fever	.....	1
Ophthalmia Neonatorum		1
Erysipelas	.....	1
Paratyphoid	.....	1
Pneumonia	.....	1

No deaths were registered attributable to notifiable infectious diseases.

Relatively few infectious diseases were notified in the Borough, the major portion occurring in patients in the St. Lawrence's Hospital, *i.e.* Dysentery, Ophthalmia Neonatorum and the case of Paratyphoid. No cases of anterior poliomyelitis were notified in the Borough, though considerable numbers were reported in other parts of the County.



## Tuberculosis

The tuberculosis notification register was carefully sifted and brought up to date. The changes in the register during 1949 are shown in the following table:

TABLE IX.

	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		Total.
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Notified cases at 1.1.49	13	18	1	1	33
New cases notified during 1949	6	7	1	—	14
Transfers to Bodmin Borough during 1949	—	3	1	1	5
Total Entries	19	28	3	2	52
Deaths registered during 1949	3	1	—	—	4
Transfers to other districts	4	5	—	—	9
Cases recovered and removed from register	—	6	—	—	6
Total removed	7	12	—	—	19
Remaining notified cases at 31.12.49	12	16	3	2	33

Fourteen new cases of tuberculosis were notified during the year as compared with three cases during 1948, and 1 death was attributed to the disease as compared with 2 during 1948. The large increase

may be due to changes in administrative arrangements in securing the notifications as they occur. About half the cases occurred in inmates of the St. Lawrence's Hospital. All domiciliary cases were visited and advice given relating to prevention of spread, and where necessary, assistance obtained either through the National Assistance Board or County Grant. Re-housing recommendations were made to the Council in 2 cases relating to tuberculous persons, these being implemented before the end of the year.

In conclusion I wish to thank the officials, in particular Mr. Miles, Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector for items of information included in this report.

I beg to remain,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN REED,

Medical Officer of Health.





